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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2006

In Today's Papers

The Cartoon Crisis

Hurriyet, Sabah, Milliyet, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others: In Jeddah on the first leg of a regional tour to cover Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Israel as well, EU Foreign Policy Representative Javier Solana met with the Saudi King Abdullah and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Secretary-General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu in an effort to defuse the growing crisis over the Prophet Muhammad cartoons. Ihsanoglu stressed that the Islamic world feels the cartoons to be a kind of '9/11 attack against Muslims.' Ihsanoglu said the EU must enact laws against "Islamophobia." Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Per Stig Moeller said it would be "meaningless" for Denmark to apologize over the cartoons. Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen met with Muslim leaders in Denmark to work out a solution to the crisis.

In the conservative daily *Turkiye*, Yilmaz Oztuna discusses Denmark's isolation: "Disapproved of by both Muslims and Christians, Denmark has not found any support in this ongoing cartoon crisis. Even Norway, which traditionally follows the Danish policy line, apologized to Muslims. Meanwhile the PM of Denmark did not make an apology, yet no country has depicted him as a champion of freedom of expression. Freedom of press and freedom of expression are certainly undeniable essentials of democracy. But this does not mean it is acceptable to disrespect humanitarian values and sacred concepts. Violation of human virtues is a clear act of disrespect to humanity."

Ankara Denies Planned Talks with Hamas

Sabah, Milliyet, Cumhuriyet, Radikal: Ankara told Israel and the United States that Hamas will not be invited to

Turkey before a government is formed in Palestine. Israel's Ambassador to Ankara, Pinhas Avivi will visit the Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) this week to urge Turkey to avoid dialogue with Hamas as long as the organization continues to support violence. MFA officials told the US and some EU countries Turkey deems important that Israel and Palestine continue to follow the road map for peace. Government Spokesman Cemil Cicek said after the Council of Ministers meeting yesterday that Turkey will take "all initiatives" in an effort to contribute to peace in the region.

Iraq: US Troops Killed, Turkish Driver Injured; Lessons from Iraq

All Papers: Four US soldiers were killed and a Turkish driver was injured in a rocket attack against a Turkish convoy ferrying food to US forces in Baghdad.

Haluk Ulman commenting in the daily Dunya suggests that "if the United States has learned anything from the Iraq experience, it should not consider a military option against Iran." He goes on to explain, "One of the US's major losses resulting from the Iraq occupation is the loss of prestige on an international scale. The Iraq situation proved the weaknesses of even the most powerful one and posed a serious blow to the deterrent role of the US. Nowadays the mullahs of Iran are defying the US because they are encouraged by the results of the Iraq experience. The failure of the Iraq occupation provides Iran with the courage and power to defy the US."

Turkey-Iran Relations; Plans for Attack

Radikal, Cumhuriyet: The Iranian Ambassador in Ankara,

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Firouz Dawlatabadi said Turkey can send a team to inspect Iran's nuclear facilities, and noted that Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul will pay a visit to Tehran soon. Dawlatabadi welcomed the Gul remarks that Turkey will not allow military operations against Iran from Turkish territory. He noted that Iran has been living under international sanctions for 27 years. "We believe that the international community will not fall into a trap set by the US and Israel," Dawlatabadi stressed. The Iranian Ambassador also said oil transfers through the Persian Gulf will not be blocked if UN sanctions are imposed on Iran. Meanwhile, a report by the Oxford Research Group said that thousands of civilians will die in attacks against some 20 nuclear facilities in Iran.

Commenting in the Islamist-oriented intellectual daily Zaman, Fikret Ertan states that new developments are making the Iran crisis more complicated. He explains that "Iran has stopped the negotiation process which was based on the Russian proposal regarding its uranium enrichment program. The bilateral talks have been postponed until an unspecified date. Moreover, the Iranian President hinted that Iran might pull out from the NPT agreement which indicates the possibility of Iran closing every door to compromise. Undoubtedly, countries disturbed by the Iranian nuclear program have already started taking some counter measures, and it goes without saying that the US is certainly one of them. It seems both sides of this crisis are preparing for a confrontation day which nobody wants. We can only hope that 'the day' will never come because it is going to be a day of colossal pain and destruction on a global scale."

Turkish High Court (Danistay) Reacts to Government Criticism

All papers: The Danistay's ruling last week overturning the appointment of a teacher to principal of a nursery school for wearing a headscarf on her way to school was severely criticized by government officials. In a statement on the issue, the Danistay said that the remarks exceeded the limits of criticism, and characterized them as "the most regrettable statements in the history of the democratic and secular Turkish Republic." The Danistay stressed that the government created the impression that the judiciary is a political rival.

Bombing in Istanbul

All papers: Fifteen people were wounded yesterday in an explosion in a supermarket in Istanbul. The PKK has claimed responsibility for the attack. Vatan says that security officials in the southeast of Turkey issued a warning for the 7th anniversary of the arrest of Ocalan, the jailed leader of PKK, on February 15 and warned people against possible violent protests.

Turkish Court Consults Kurdish Institute on Kurdish Name

Sabah, Milliyet: A Turkish court has asked the Kurdish Institute in Istanbul the meaning of a Kurdish name to decide whether or not it will be "appropriate" for a petitioner, Yusuf Simsek, to change his name to "Sores." The court asked the Kurdish Institute whether the name is in line with moral values in Turkey. The institute said the word means "revolution" in Kurdish, and was widely used as a Kurdish name in Turkey. A member of the institute said such consultations by state institutions constituted significant forward steps in recognition of the Kurdish language in Turkey.

Former PKK Leader Buried in Turkey

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All papers: On Monday, the former PKK leader for Europe, Kani Yilmaz, who was killed in Suleymaniye in northern Iraq last weekend, is laid to rest in the southeastern city of Sanliurfa. Milliyet claims that thus far the PKK has killed 1500 of its members for leaving the organization.

TV Highlights

NTV (8 a.m)

- German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier is to pay a one-day working visit to Ankara as the official guest of Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul to discuss the Prophet Muhammad cartoons crisis and Turkey's ties with the EU.

- The main opposition party, CHP, filed a lawsuit against Prime Minister Erdogan and Finance Minister Kemal Unakitan for abusing his authority regarding the privatization of oil refiner Tupras.

- Imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan petitioned a court for retrial in line with a ruling of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).

- Turkey's aviation electronics company HAVELSAN exports 30 million USD of CN-235 flight simulators to South Korea.

WILSON